



From the Fleet to the Classroom

Naval Academy Alumni Find a Second Calling

By Captain Gordon I. Peterson '68, USN (Ret.)

In 2007, the United States is projected to reach another milestone in its classrooms when the student population exceeds 54 million—a growth of three million in a decade's time according to the Department of Education (DOE). This enrollment increase occurred at the same time teacher retirements accelerated, leading DOE to describe the trend as a “demographic double whammy.”

Like generations of graduates preceding them, Naval Academy Alumni today are making important contributions to help solve this challenge. Many Alumni find that working with students offers a natural and rewarding transition from military service.

Motivations for teaching are as varied and include performing a community service, an interest in education, a love for the subject matter, a desire to “pay it forward” to the nation's youth, an opportunity to share knowledge and even simple curiosity. The rewards, while generally not substantial monetarily for the long hours and workload, mirror the satisfaction one would expect to find in individuals imbued in the concept of service, the importance of a good education, and “... the highest ideals of duty, honor and loyalty.”

H. Glenn Boggs II '68, a professor in the College of Business at Florida State University, finds his work in the classroom a rewarding and enjoyable experience. “To the extent a teacher can have a positive influence on future generations,” he said, “it helps us all.”

Peter W. Damisch '75 has translated a lifetime's love of sailing into a world-class school in San Diego, CA, organized and staffed to introduce the sport to new generations of sailors. Photo courtesy of Bluewater Sailing

Making Connections

“I wanted to give something back to the community that supported me as I grew up,” said Commander Stephen R. Ingalsbe ’72, USN (Ret.), of his decision following a 23-year Navy career as a naval flight officer. Awarded the Teacher of the Year for 2006 and 2007 in the Springfield, MO, public school system, Ingalsbe is now an eighth-grade math teacher and department chair. “I wanted to work with students from the center-city neighborhoods that I grew up in to show them that through education you can have a successful and exciting life,” Ingalsbe said. “I am able to share with them my life experiences to broaden their perspective on their futures.”

Lieutenant Colonel Gary E. “Slydog” Slyman ’81, USMC (Ret.), head of the middle school at the Gerstell Academy in Finksburg, MD, said, “I wanted to be able to have a positive influence and help young people develop into leaders.” A 23-year veteran of the Marine Corps and former commanding officer of Marine Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron 4, Slyman found that his background helped in the classroom. “The experience gained in a military career is much broader and deeper than the typical teacher’s,” he said. “That background opens many opportunities to make connections to your students.”

Be it an Alumnus who departed the ranks of the armed forces at the completion of obligated service or one who served an entire career in uniform, many graduates find that teaching fits well with their military lifestyle. “Throughout our careers we have taught many classes—in ready rooms, wardrooms, tents and staterooms,” said Slyman.

Colonel Harvey C. “Barney” Barnum, USMC (Ret.), the deputy secretary of the Navy for reserve affairs, noted that the military has traditionally emphasized continuing education and professional development as part of a balanced career progression. Speaking at a meeting of the Washington Coast Guard Association, Barnum stated that a strong leader must be, fundamentally, a teacher.

Beyond academic qualifications, the qualities esteemed by the military in its officers—competencies in leadership, management and organizational planning, oral and written communication skills—also are in high demand in educational circles.

Monsignor Stuart W. Swetland ’81, the director of homiletics and pre-theology at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary, notes that “educate” comes from the Latin “e-ducere”—to lead out. “Thus,” he said, “being an educator is a vocation of applied leadership.” Monsignor Swetland, a Rhodes Scholar and former surface line officer, continues to draw on his experiences in the Navy in his teaching.

Private gifts to the Naval Academy Foundation have funded 17 faculty and administrator positions at the Naval Academy, including endowed faculty chairs, distinguished visiting professors (DVPs) and distinguished military professors (DMPs) with the Distinguished Chair in Leadership, the Class of 1957 Chair in Naval Heritage, the Class of 1960 DVP in National Security, the Dr. David F. Rogers DVP in Aeronautical Engineering and the Class of 1972 DMP in Character Development. These faculty members add tremendous value to the Academy’s curriculum, and a more robust academic experience for midshipmen.

Captain Michael M. Raggett ’62, USN (Ret.), transitioned from a 30-year career in the submarine force to teach algebra and chemistry to eighth graders in Santa Catalina, CA, before retiring this year. He continues to coach high school track and cross country. “Most of the time in the peacetime Navy we are training or teaching,” he said. Beyond academic work, Raggett thinks it is important to serve as a positive role model in the classroom. “It is an opportunity to emphasize to young people the importance of honesty, integrity and hard work,” he stated.

It is said that if you love what you are doing you will never work a day in your life. Some Alumni no doubt would claim that Captain Peter W. Damisch ’75, USNR (Ret.), is living proof. A former nuclear-qualified surface warfare officer, he is the co-owner and managing director of Bluewater Sailing in San Diego, CA. Having logged more than 350,000 miles of sailing in 33 years, his school offers a full range of instruction. “I continue to enjoy the opportunity to educate others in a new skill, particularly one as enjoyable a sport as sailing,” he said.

Major Louis S. Cohen ’59, USAF (Ret.), also found that he always enjoyed teaching during his service. He continued to teach in the work space in a defense industry after resigning his commission. “I brought new college graduates on board and trained them in the technical skills used in systems engineering and management,” he said. Despite making the transition to education comparatively late in his adult life, teaching positions in junior and community colleges led to a position as chair of the department for math, science and computers at Fisher College in Boston, MA.

ALUMNI IN ACTION

Some Alumni credit their own teacher's example and inspiration for leading them to the classroom. Lieutenant Commander Richard B. Cox '84, USN (Ret.), a history teacher at Landstown High School in Virginia Beach, VA, said his Naval Academy experience played a formative role in his career decision. "At USNA I was fortunate to have a variety of superb history teachers, especially Professor Larry Thompson and Professor Craig Symonds," Cox related. "Their passion for history, genuine interest in the education of their students, patience with aspiring historians and fantastic classroom presence were major influences in my desire to become a teacher."

Dallas R. Roper '84, selected to "Who's Who Among America's Teachers" while teaching chemistry at East Hill Christian High School in Pensacola, FL, had a similar experience. "My high school chemistry teacher had such a passion for chemistry, which was evident in the way he presented the material," he said. "It challenged us to do our very best and have a passion for what we are doing in all aspects of life. I want my students to get that same passion for learning."

More than one teacher has been lured to the classroom by an inquisitive nature. Eric F. Thacher '58, recently retired as professor emeritus at Clarkson University

in Potsdam, NY, found that work in the nuclear-power industry after he left the Navy did not provide the opportunity to explore subjects that interested him. "As a faculty member at a university, I was able to work on problems of my own choosing, such as solar energy, and not be limited by the demands of commerce," he said.

At Clarkson, Thacher institutionalized project-based learning communities. His assignment as faculty advisor to the school's Solar Car Team in 1988 changed his outlook on what education should be—something more than standing before a class delivering a lecture. "The essential thing is for students to learn how to solve real professional problems," he related. "They would do this in a learning community centered on real work—like building and racing a solar car. The prime characteristic of real problems is that they have many possible solutions."

Returning the Favor

Naval Academy Alumni also are well-represented today in the ranks of faculty and administration at the nation's military schools and Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs at civilian universities. The exposure often leads to a follow-on teaching career.

Commander Douglas V. Smith '70, USN (Ret.), a professor of strategy and policy at the U.S. Naval War College in

Newport, RI, concluded his Navy career as a uniformed professor. "I liked it so much I transitioned to the civilian equivalent of the same position," he said. Commander Don Marrin '81, USN (Ret.), an assistant research professor at the College's War Gaming Department, had a similar experience, having served previously with his department both on active duty and then as a contractor from 2000 to 2004.

On the West Coast, Captain Randy Hess '73, USN (Ret.) serves as an associate professor of joint military operations at the College of Distance Education at the Naval War College's campus in Monterey, CA. He is joined there by Commander Mitch Brown '68, USN (Ret.). "Ever since I served as the director of the Naval Academy Foreign Affairs Conference in 1968 until the present day, I have benefited from my educational opportunities in the Navy," Brown stated. "For the past 23 years I have been returning the favor."

Active-duty officers have been assigned to teaching and executive positions at the Naval Academy since its founding. General Michael W. Hagee '68, USMC, commandant of the Marine Corps, served at the Academy three times, including assignments as an electrical engineering instructor, the director of the Humanities and Social Science Division and as director of the Character



Rear Admiral Donald L. Sturtz '55, MC, USN (Ret.), assists first-year medical students as they agonize over their pending anatomy examination. Photo by Larry Carter, USUHS



H. Glenn Boggs II '68 (left), a professor in the College of Business at Florida State University, meets with some of his students following a course lecture. Photo courtesy of Florida State University

Development Division. Admiral Michael G. Mullen '68, USN, the chief of naval operations, also served at the Academy as a company officer and executive assistant to the commandant of midshipmen.

For Commander Henry Jones '79, USN, his experience with students with the 1995 Marco Polo Project sponsored by the Navy Oceanography Office and the National Geographic Society led to his current posting as an assistant professor in the Oceanography Department. "I had the experience of mentoring future scientists—high school students from various states who toured our overseas locations and rode Navy ocean-research ships during the summer," he said.

Military instructors at the Academy do more than impart academic skills; they shape the professional careers of those they teach. "A handful of my plebes have chosen to become math majors because of their experiences in my calculus classes," related Commander Christopher M. Cook '88, USNR. "At least a half-dozen upper class midshipmen have chosen to explore operations analysis in post-graduate school after exposure to the field in my classes."

Today's blend of highly qualified civilian and military faculty members is considered a major strength in the Naval Academy's reputation for excellence.

Hungry for Information

Commander Leonard J. Hamilton '84, USN, brings an impressive list of degrees to his responsibilities as an assistant professor and associate chairman of the Academy's Mechanical Engineering Department. However, it is his experience as a flight instructor, an F-14 Tomcat fighter pilot during Operation Desert Storm, a Navy test pilot and an aerospace engineering duty officer that resonate best with the midshipmen he teaches.

"Many of my students appreciate the fact that I bring a great deal of military experience to the classroom," he said. "They understand that they will be entering the fleet shortly and are hungry for as much information as I can feed them."

Hamilton values his two-year assignment as a Navy flight instructor in his current work. "That experience helped me to develop critical teaching skills such as preparedness, patience and an ability to adapt my teaching techniques to various learning styles." Like fellow Alumnus Eric F. Thacher, Hamilton's most memorable teaching experience entails his students designing and building a formula-style race car that is entered in competition with approximately 140 other colleges each May. "It's exciting and fulfilling to see my students racing in a vehicle that they created."

Hamilton, this year's recipient of the Class of 1951 Military Faculty Teaching Excellence Award and the William P. Clements Award for Excellence in Education, noted that midshipman experience frustration if forced to sit out a race owing to a mechanical failure traced to a simple design flaw. "At times like that," he said, "I remind them that we often learn more from our failures than our successes."

In addition to active-duty officers assigned to teaching positions at colleges participating in the ROTC Program, retired officers also team with retired enlisted personnel to instruct in the 619 units of the Naval Junior ROTC Program.

Commander Edward A. Flores '84, USN (Ret.), first contemplated a teaching career during a department head assignment as a surface warfare officer. "I was teaching ship driving to junior officers, and that is when I sat back and thought that when I got out I would go into teaching." Today, Flores is an NJROTC naval science instructor at Pasco High School in Dade City, FL. His experiences have been rewarding, but he also acknowledges the challenges involved with teaching young students. "You have to realize that motivating and appealing to others is required," he said. "When all else fails, you don't have the option of giving



Commander Leonard J. Hamilton '84, USN, shown with his midshipmen students and the formula-class race car they designed in his course. Photo courtesy of the U.S. Naval Academy



Commander Edward A. Flores '84 (center) converses with Cadet Ensign Charles Dehaan (right) and Cadet Master Chief Petty Officer Jamie Blaine about the procedures followed for underway replenishment during a one-week training session on the guided-missile frigate *KLAKRING* (FFG-42) earlier this year. Photo by Jennifer Ingersoll

ALUMNI IN ACTION

an order—you have to find yet another approach if you want to get it done.”

Two assignments as an NROTC instructor at the college level prepared Commander Robert A. Stubblefield Jr. '84, USN (Ret.), for his current work as a senior naval science instructor with the NJROTC unit at Lakewood High School in Lakewood, CA. “The transition to a 4,600-student high school had many challenges,” Stubblefield said. “I had to change my vocabulary from ‘I’ to ‘we’ as I worked with my fellow teacher, a retired master chief petty officer. I also had to overcome the students’ resistance to learn.”

Naval Academy Alumni often follow a serendipitous path to the classroom. Rear Admiral Donald L. Sturtz '55, MC, USN (Ret.), served at sea on the escort destroyer RADFORD (DDE-446) prior to entering flight school and earning his Navy wings. Leaving active duty to enter medical school, he graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and completed his military career as a Navy physician. Today, he serves in retirement as a professor of surgery and the deputy chairman emeritus of the Norman M. Rich Department of Surgery at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, MD.

“The ongoing teaching of advanced trauma life support has been rewarding because there is a direct impact on saving the lives of trauma victims,” he said of his current responsibilities. “The Naval Academy experience results in a disciplined mind set with high standards of morality and the desire to serve others.”

John H. Galla '58, professor emeritus of medicine at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, OH, also continues his teaching and patient care. He said, “I had the good fortune to study under some of the recognized



Monsignor Stuart W. Swetland '81 (left) has devoted his adult life to the calling of education in the Catholic Church. Photo courtesy of Monsignor Swetland

international giants in the area of renal electrolyte transport and pathophysiology. This made this area of medicine absolutely fascinating to me.”

Challenges

Despite the many rewards teachers experience in the classroom, there are challenges. Teaching students who are not receptive or, at the elementary or secondary level, are disruptive in the classroom, can be wearisome. Teaching also entails its own form of homework for the instructor—reading and grading exams, preparing lesson plans and maintaining academic certification with continued study.

“Even though classes end at 3 p.m.,” said Roper, “I have homework, labs, quizzes and tests to grade. I also have to prepare the next day’s lessons. Balancing this with spending time with my family, church responsibilities and coaching does get challenging.”

At the university level, there may be pressures to publish and generate funds for research. Academy Alumni also emphasize that past experiences teaching in the military may contrast with the conditions in the civilian classroom—the transition is easy for some, but more difficult for others.

“It has been an adjustment to teaching high school from my experiences teaching

at the Naval Academy,” said Commander Anthony J. Quatroche '78, USN (Ret.), a mathematics instructor at Robert E. Fitch High School in Groton, CT. “It all revolves around motivating students and classroom management.”

Some educators are troubled by what they see in the ranks of administration. “I love being in the classroom and helping others learn as I learn about how they learn,” said Thomas F. Hawk '64, a professor in Frostburg State University’s Department of Management. “I do not like the anti-innovation and risk-avoidance character of so many administrators in higher education.”

Still, for those who have a passion for teaching, there is no greater reward or satisfaction than contributing to a young person’s transformation and growth in the classroom. “My most memorable experience is the sense of fulfillment that comes as I run into former students years later who tell me the effect I had on their lives,” said Captain Douglas K. Menikheim '60, USN (Ret.), an adjunct professor at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN. This knowledge motivates many educators to remain in the classroom despite the challenges they face.

“We soon forget many celebrities and personalities,” said Rear Admiral Sturtz, “but we long remember teachers who influenced us to excel in our lives and work.” ✚

Captain Peterson, a naval aviator and public affairs specialist prior to his Navy retirement, is a senior technical director with General Dynamics Information Technology. He also is the North America editor for Naval Forces magazine.

Editor’s note: This is the first article in a two-part series on Naval Academy Alumni in the education profession. Look for the concluding article in early 2007.



Investing in the Lives of Future Leaders

From the Fleet to the Classroom, Part II

By Captain Gordon I. Peterson '68, USN (Ret.)

Naval Academy Alumni have transitioned from military service to teaching in the classroom in varied ways, but the advice they offer to those contemplating a similar career change is marked by common themes—self-assessment, research and preparation.

“You need to like and enjoy kids,” said Michael L. Hartman '59, who retired in 1997 after 25 years with the Gresham Barlow School District. Hartman’s decision to pursue a career in education was influenced by several friends. “Despite numerous drawbacks that they pointed out—lack of a good salary, long hours after school and disruptive kids—they seemed to really enjoy their work.”

Motivation and commitment are important. “If pure didactic teaching is your goal,” said Dr. John H. Galla '58, professor emeritus at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, “do it only if you love it.”

Just as life in the Navy or Marine Corps is not for everyone, neither is education. “I find that you really must want to do it,” said Commander Edward A. Flores '84, USN (Ret.), an instructor with the Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) at Pasco High School. “When you join the military you take on a role as a public servant; a teacher in public education is just another role in being a public servant.”

Commander Robert A. Stubblefield '84, USN (Ret.), a fellow NJROTC instructor at Lakewood High School, echoed this view. “You have to care for others,” he said. “Teaching is more than a job—when it only becomes a paycheck, it is time to do something else.”

Commander Eigil “Gil” Hansen Jr. '60, USN (Ret.), shown teaching students in the 11th grade, serves as the administrator and an instructor at the Fairfax Baptist Temple Academy in Fairfax Station, VA.

Commander Anthony J. Quatroche '78, USN (Ret.), served for nearly 23 years in the submarine force. Armed with a master of science degree in naval architecture, he decided to continue teaching during a two-year assignment at the Naval Academy during the mid-1980s. "It has been an adjustment teaching high school from my experiences teaching at USNA," he said. "It all revolves around motivating students and classroom management." Teaching students enrolled in honors courses is one thing, Quatroche observed, but teaching mainstream students is a challenge of another magnitude.

"With four 86-minute periods in our block schedule," he said, "it takes a lot of creativity to keep students involved and learning for that amount of time." Still, there are many intangible rewards. "Seeing students have the 'a-ha!' moment when they comprehend a concept or watching them move up to be successful in the more challenging courses or at a tough college or university is, as they say, 'priceless.'"

"First and foremost," advise Jim Clark '66 and Captain Kirk Wessel '75, USNR (Ret.), "you need to understand that this is not about the money. If money is your passion, do something else. You will not get rich through teaching and research (although there are a few exceptions), but you can make enough money to live comfortably." Clark is the dean of the Gore School of Business at Westminster College. Wessel, a retired naval aviator, is an associate professor of management at Westminster, a private, liberal arts college.

In their view, there is a trade off between an individual's knowledge, experience and energy. "For most of us," they observe, "that means entering academia somewhere between the ages of 35 and 55." The key in determining when to pursue

a career in education depends, in large measure, on having capacity in each area. "We think this usually happens after at least 10 years of work experience, but probably not after 25 to 30 years of work experience," they said.

Cultural considerations also are important—especially at the college or university level, according to Vice Admiral Paul G. Gaffney II '68, USN (Ret.), president of Monmouth College in West Long Branch, NJ. "Presidents don't hire faculty," he said, "faculty hire faculty—so when applying for a job one needs to understand the culture of the academic department one desires to enter." In Gaffney's view, different hiring strategies are needed for positions in teaching versus those in research.

"The demand for impeccable integrity at the Naval Academy and in the Navy is what Alumni are ideally qualified to impart in the hearts and minds of our younger generation."

"If I have any influence," he said, "I stress a connection to student. I would want a professor that presents views strongly, but is tolerant—even encourages—opposing opinions. I would hope a professor could set up a debate, in a student's mind, among opposing ideas. I also try to inspire our professors to cultivate confidence in students—to bring them out so they can defend their ideas and, in time, be leaders within the workforce."

Why Do You Want to Teach?

Most successful career moves entail thorough research and a well-constructed transition plan. Teaching is no different—translate your years of operational planning into developing your personal

"op order" for career transition. Some academic disciplines offer more opportunities for hiring than others, so it is important to know where the greatest needs exist.

There are significant differences between teaching at the elementary, secondary and college level. Some Alumni enjoy the challenge and opportunity of helping youth to develop academically and socially early in their lives. Alternatively, others find greater satisfaction in teaching at the college level where, in the words of some Alumni, the students are in the classroom because they want to be there.

"Reflect on why you want to be a teacher," counsels Commander Leonard J. Hamilton '84, USN, a mechanical engineering instructor at the Naval Academy.

"This is not a job to be taken lightly. You must have a sincere dedication to the welfare of your students—this is a very unselfish career."

Informational interviews with friends or classmates who have transitioned to the classroom will help you fill in the blanks in your career plan.

"If you decide you want to teach, be sure you have the gift for teaching," said Dallas Roy Roper '84, a chemistry teacher at the East Hill Christian High School. "Not everyone can teach."

In addition to teaching assignments while in uniform, other opportunities are available in the classroom before seeking a full-time position. Tutoring and substitute teaching offer possibilities. In the national



Jim Clark '66, dean of the Gore School of Business at Westminster College, and Captain Kirk Wessel '75, USNR (Ret.), associate professor of management at Westminster, a private, liberal-arts college.

capital region in Washington, DC, for example, Project Northstar administers a one-on-one tutoring program for homeless youth residing with their family or guardians in the city's homeless shelters.

Some Alumni continue their affiliation with education through tutoring well past formal retirement. Captain Marshall Slayton '55, USN (Ret.), tutors for a small private learning center. Some of his students require special education. "At 75, I am responsible for helping with the education of two to three young people a day in subjects ranging from pre-algebra to pre-calculus," he said. "It is a very gratifying service."

Volunteer work, especially in elementary and secondary levels, also affords an opportunity to observe teachers day to day. "Try volunteering at an elementary or middle school," said Malcolm Murray '60. "They need help badly."

Commander Bill Lee '74, USN (Ret.), took night classes while on shore duty as retirement from the Navy approached. "I completed my student teaching after I actually retired," he said. "I spent five years as a short-term substitute teacher in the Virginia Beach Public Schools, primarily in middle school." Lee now serves as the manager

for education programs in the education department of the Virginia Air and Space Center, a science museum. "We teach programs that cover the state of Virginia's standards of learning to local schools arriving on field trips," he related.

Alumni offer mixed views on the desirability of accepting adjunct positions at the junior college or college level. "Don't get into the adjunct teaching business," said Captain David Poyer '71, USNR (Ret.), an assistant professor at Wilkes University. "It is very difficult, a high workload, and a low pay regime—hold out for a full-time position or do something else."

Still, some Alumni have used the adjunct route to gain full-time teaching positions—often while taking courses to earn an advanced degree in a subject they want to teach. Captain Michael Slattery '68, USN (Ret.), did so as part of an extended campus program for Campbell University offered at Pope Air Force Base, NC. "The main campus called and

asked if I would be interested in teaching an evening class in government," Slattery related. "I said yes and worked my way into day classes—never to teach at night again."

Slattery first contemplated a career in education while serving as a senior instructor at the Navy's Basic Underwater Demolition School teaching SEAL tactics following his last deployment to Vietnam. "I filed that experience away for another time," he said. "It took a while, but here I am doing what I thoroughly enjoy—interacting with motivated students." His courses in government and military history are especially popular owing to his first-hand experiences in uniform.

Be Prepared

Prospective teachers should research the variety of services and assistance programs available to veterans. Lyndsay Katauskas '02, medically retired from the Marine Corps with a service connected disability, is now earning a masters degree while substitute



Captain Gary Lovgren '78, USNR (Ret.), a teacher in the Conway, NH, school system also serves as New Hampshire's administrator for the Department of Defense "Troops-to-Teachers" Program.

teaching. Her goal is to serve as a counselor in an elementary school. “If you had to get out of the military early because of a service connected disability, and you are making a complete career change, find out how to use your Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation benefits and the G.I. Bill,” she said.

One of the best sources of assistance for those contemplating teaching at the elementary or secondary level is the federally sponsored Troops-to-Teachers Program (TTT). TTT assists eligible military personnel transition to a career as public school teachers in targeted schools. In addition to teaching a variety of courses in both elementary school and high school in Conway, NH, since retirement in 2003, Captain Gary Lovgren ’78, USN (Ret.), has administered the TTT for New Hampshire on a part-time basis. “This program helped me understand what I needed to do to gain certification and assisted me in the job placement phase,” Lovgren said. “Most importantly though is the network that currently exists to help so many of us who have decided they would like to teach as our second calling.”

Some colleges, especially those located near areas with large concentrations of military personnel, offer teaching transition courses for military members. For example, Old Dominion offers a Military Career Transition Program to assist interested military personnel complete courses necessary for certification.

Lieutenant Commander S. Duane Stratton ’59, USN (Ret.), now retired from teaching at Golden State University, simply tells prospective teachers, “Be prepared, be prepared, be prepared—be prepared academically, be prepared psychologically and be prepared socially.” When one leaves the Navy, he says, it is

important to remember that you are “not in Kansas anymore.” The collegial atmosphere of academia is a far cry from the authoritarian atmosphere of the military; “Academia is different and must be treated differently,” he observed.

Said Captain Larry Warrenfeltz ’75, USN (Ret.), “Stow away the sea stories while in the teacher’s lounge, but use them freely in the classroom.”

Mastery of one’s subject matter and a genuine motivation to teach—a passion—top the recommendations Alumni offer to future teachers. Certification requirements vary from state to state, and they can be extensive. “I was required to take an additional 42 college credits to become fully certified as a math teacher in grades 5 through 12 in the state of Missouri,” said Commander Stephen R. Ingalsbe ’72, USN (Ret.). “I used my G.I. Bill benefits to complete this in 18 months.” Ingalsbe volunteered in his daughter’s high school by answering the telephone in the main office to gain a sense of the public school environment.

Advanced degrees are essential for teaching at the college or university level, and a doctorate (a pre-requisite at many universities) will make you more competitive in the hiring process. A masters degree also can make one more competitive for secondary level positions and lead to a



Captain Michael Slattery '68, USN (Ret.), teaches a history course on the Vietnam War at Campbell University, NC.

higher salary. Most career officers have the opportunity to attend post-graduate school while still in uniform, and many Alumni have applied this education to their post-military pursuits in the classroom.

The decision to teach is a very personal matter. Today’s ranks of Naval Academy Alumni teaching in the classroom were motivated to do so by a wide range of influences and interests. A strong ideal of service, however, is often a common denominator.

“I would strongly encourage any USNA Alumnus to consider a career in education after their service in the Navy,” said Commander Eigil L. Hansen Jr. ’60, USN (Ret.), the administrator of the Fairfax Baptist Temple Academy. “The demand for impeccable integrity at the Naval Academy and in the Navy is what Alumni are ideally qualified to impart in the hearts and minds of our younger generation,” he said.

“There is nothing more gratifying than investing yourself in the lives of our future generation of leaders.” ✚

Captain Peterson, a naval aviator and public affairs specialist prior to his Navy retirement, is the military legislative assistant for Senator James Webb ’68. He gratefully acknowledges the hundreds of e-mail communications from those Alumni who contributed to his research during the preparation of these articles.

(Editor’s Note: This is the concluding article in a two-part series on Naval Academy Alumni serving in the education profession. Captain Peterson’s first article was published in Shipmate’s October 2006 issue and may be viewed at www.usna.com.)